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PAKISTAN: Mujibur Rahman's announced attempt at a unilateral take-over of the administration of East Pakistan represents his strongest challenge yet to President Yahya Khan and the martial law government.

According to press reports, Mujib early today claimed that he had taken over administration of the East wing except for the cities of Dacca, Comilla, and Jessore. This assumption of power follows one week of a noncooperation campaign called by Mujib, during which he became the de facto ruler of East Pakistan. His announcement may be an attempt to force the West Pakistan - dominated central government to accede to his demand that power in East Pakistan be turned over to elected representatives of the people as a preliminary step before the recently elected National Assembly meets to write a new constitution.

Mujib's action is the closest step he has taken toward a declaration of independence for East Pakistan. It is not yet certain that he prefers such a declaration, except as a last resort. His preference seems to be for some type of confederation between the East and West wings, which would give East Pakistan virtually complete autonomy. The central government is unlikely to find a confederation scheme acceptable and will probably resist Mujib's announced take-over attempt. Meanwhile, Yahya reportedly arrived in Dacca early this morning.

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NATO-CES: NATO Ambassador Ellsworth reports that most European allies of the US believe that a conference on European security (CES) would be inevitable if and when a Berlin agreement is reached.

Recent discussions in NATO indicate that the Allies generally believe that a conference would serve a useful purpose. Many of them now are prepared to accept a merely hortatory conference because they feel that even without concrete accomplishments it would improve the East-West atmosphere and would be helpful to them domestically. Ellsworth thinks that the Allies are not now prepared to give due consideration to concrete Western CES objectives unless the US provides all the basic studies and groundwork for such an effort in the next few months.

Most of the Allies apparently regard Berlin as the only necessary precondition to a CES, even though the current NATO position calls for favorable development of "other ongoing talks" as well. The French permanent representative to NATO last week informally raised the question of CES preconditions, implying the Allies should re-evaluate them for the ministerial meeting to be held in June in Lisbon. The French have already convinced the West Germans that it is unnecessary to require progress in other ongoing talks, arguing that such a vague condition might be holding the Soviets back from making concessions in the Berlin talks.

Since the ministerial meeting in December, the Allies have remained united in their responses to East European urgings to move to multilateral preparations for a security conference. Active discussion of CES preconditions this far in advance of the next ministerial is unlikely to shake the Allies from their insistence on a Berlin settlement, but such discussions might very well be perceived in Moscow as a weakening of the Western resolve.

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